

W I N T E R
OLYMPICS
PREVIEW

Can
**Shaun
White**
three-peat?



NBC OLYMPICS / USOC

PRIMETIME TV COVERAGE BEGINS **THURSDAY, FEB. 6** ON NBC

W I N T E R

OLYMPICS

PREVIEW

Your guide to
Sochi 2014

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Sochi: A Coastal Jewel



SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

Sochi, a coastal resort city in Russia, will play host to the 2014 Winter Olympics that begin Thursday, Feb. 6.

With the Winter Olympics taking place in Russia, the city of Sochi is ready to shine. Sochi was founded in 1898 and has built its reputation as a resort city.

The discovery of the hydrogen springs throughout the territory of the town boosted its growth, according to the Russian tourism website VisitRussia.com. By the beginning of the 20th century, numerous hotel complexes, summer houses and distinct architecture began popping up throughout Sochi.

Many of those buildings have been preserved and restored to glory, serving as unique resort-like complexes that draw large crowds of tourists every year.

ENVIRONMENT

The natural beauty of Sochi will

provide a serene backdrop for the Winter Games. Featuring babbling streams and rivers throughout the Caucasus mountains, the city also boasts a wide variety of vegetation.

Cypresses, cedars, magnolias and eucalypts are a few of the native plant and tree life that will help Sochi provide Olympic visitors a balanced mix

of upscale venues and cityscapes with a peaceful, picturesque environment.

THE CLIMATE

Sochi has a subtropical climate, and winter temperatures can vary from

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SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

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low 30s to high 40s, according to Sochi2014.org. The warmer, seaside conditions will help enhance the experience for fans and athletes alike, although most people will be hoping for a generous amount of snow.

In case of unexpectedly warm weather, Olympic organizers have the capability to produce snow, even in 50- to 60-degree weather.

GOING BIG

Numerous news and Olympics reports estimate that the Winter Games will cost more than \$50 billion, making it the most costly games – either summer or winter – in history.

New athletic venues have been built and will be divided into a mountain cluster and a coastal cluster. Going so big is essential to Russia, which hasn't hosted any Olympic events since the 1980 Summer Games in the U.S.S.R.

The United States boycotted those games to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, so this will mark the first Olympics events for Americans on Russian soil.



SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

The Sochi Museum of Art, built in 1936, is one of the city's most noteworthy architectural landmarks.



SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

The Caucasus Mountains will provide a gorgeous backdrop for outdoor events in the 2014 Winter Olympics.

A Grand Olympic Kickoff



SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

More than 2,000 volunteers and \$52 million. That is what it will take to pull off a highly anticipated Russian opening ceremony.

And speaking of numbers, the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee recently announced that the opening ceremony will start at 20:14 Moscow time on Feb. 7. The time symbolizes the year that the first ever Olympic Winter Games will take place in Russia.

THE DETAILS

The opening ceremony is slated to last three hours within the “Fisht” Olympic Stadium. In total, 3,000 young people and artistic groups will take part in both the opening and closing ceremonies.

Dance and acrobatic performances will showcase Russian culture and entertainment while also appealing to viewers worldwide who will be watching the ceremonies from the comfort of their own

living rooms.

About 2,000 Sochi volunteers will help organize the opening and closing ceremonies.

THE COST

The opening ceremony of the Sochi Olympics will cost Russia about \$52 million, according to forecasts published at Sochi2014.com. Here’s how the money breaks down:

- The nonprofit agency that is coordinating the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games will receive a subsidy for preparing and organizing the events.
- The bulk of the money will be spent on technical facilities and foreign designers.
- Although a hefty price tag, the Sochi Olympics

will come in about \$13 million cheaper than the 2012 London games (\$65 million).

THE THEME

According to reports in the Russian news media, the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics is highlighting Russian fairy tales, the Russian troika of Gogol’s “Dead Souls” and Peter the Great leading the fleet of five ships.

Always a display of full-on patriotism, colorful decorations and pounding music, this winter’s event will kick off by carrying on the tradition set by so many Olympics before it.

The opening ceremony will end with the advent of the Olympic flame. Students of circus and dance schools will also participate in the opening ceremony.

A Look at the Venues



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

Bolshoy Ice Dome

A highly anticipated feature of the 2014 Winter Olympics is the overall venue landscape.

Olympic Park will serve as the centerpiece of a double-cluster layout and will host the opening and closing ceremonies for the Sochi games.

The park is within the coastal cluster along the Black Sea and will also host ice hockey, speed skating, figure skating and curling events as well as being the site of the main Olympic Village.

The mountain cluster of complex-

es will host the bobsled, skiing and ski jumping, snowboarding and biathlon events.

THE SETUP

Eleven athletic venues have been built for the Sochi 2014 Games, which will be divided into the aforementioned clusters. The clusters will

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Sanki Sliding Center

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be located within a 30-minute ride along a newly added railway system.

The travel time from the Olympic Village to a competition venue in the coastal cluster will be no more than five minutes, according to Sochi organizers. Travel time from the Olympic Village to a competition venue in the mountain cluster is less than 15 minutes, they say.

CONVENIENCE

According to Sochi2014.com, the setup of this Winter Olympics' venues will be among the most compact in the history of the Olympics.

Also, all Olympic and Paralympic competition will take place in the same venues. It is for this reason that all athletic facilities for the Sochi 2014 Games have been built in alignment with the needs of disabled people.

NEW VENUES, NEW EVENTS

One reason for the substantial number of venues is the addition of a slew of new events by the International Olympic Committee. Twelve new events have been added for Sochi, eight of them in the free-style and snowboard disciplines.

There will be a total of 98 events across all the sports, with athletes from more than 80 countries vying for gold medals.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOCHI 2014 PRESS OFFICE

Adler Arena



Iceberg Skating Palace



Xtreme Snowboard Center

Torch Makes Trip to Space

It wasn't the Olympic torch's first trip into space, but it was its first time leaving a spaceship. Exactly one month after the start of the torch's journey across Russia, it was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in mid-November.

On arrival at the International Space Station, ship commander and cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin passed the torch to Oleg Kotov and Sergey Ryazansky, who then took the torch on its first-ever spacewalk.

THE JOURNEY

The Olympic torch has been carried into space twice before – in 1996 and 2000 – but it had never previously left a spaceship, according to Olympic.org.

The torch was obviously unlit inside the ISS because of safety concerns and outside due to the lack of oxygen.

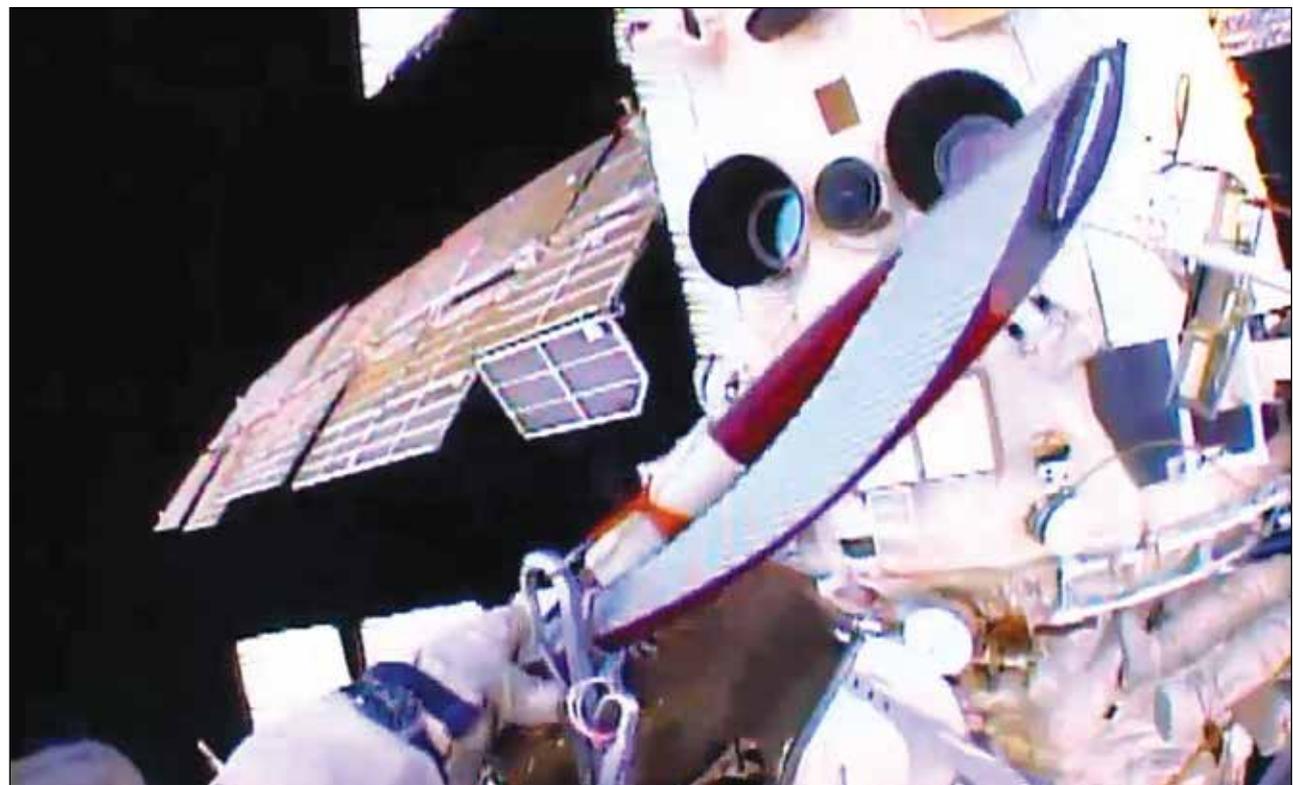
A different crew comprised of Russia's Fyodor Yurchikhin, American astronaut Karen Nyberg and Italian Luca Parmitano brought the torch back to Earth to continue its journey.

OTHER STOPS

The space odyssey was just one stop on the longest torch journey in the history of the Winter Games. The Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee took official possession of the torch at the lighting ceremony in Athens.

The journey was planned to span more than 40,000 miles over the course of 123 days until the events begin in Sochi.

Torchbearers used Russian troikas, dog sleds, deer-drawn sleighs, snowmobiles,



NASA PHOTO

The Olympic torch made its first-ever spacewalk excursion in November.

air-balloons, aircraft and trains, according to a report by the state-run Voice of Russia. The report also states that the torch transit plan includes going under water, on top of Europe's highest peak and visiting the North Pole on a nuclear-powered icebreaker.

BY THE NUMBERS

According to Sochi2014.com, there are some interesting numbers associated with

this Winter Games' torch journey.

- Some 14,000 torchbearers will carry it through 2,900 settlements of 83 regions of the country

- The flame was lit in Greece and made its way through 33 towns before the ceremony in Athens.

- The biggest torch relay in the history of the Olympics is the 85,000-mile trip around China for the 2008 Beijing Summer Games, which required 21,880 bearers.

THE MEANING OF THE TORCH: A LINK TO THE PAST

The lighting of the torch catalyzes a very historic, special ritual – one that is carried out for months before the opening of the Games. The flame is lit in Olympia, Greece, in honor of the modern Olympic Games' ancient origins. According to Olympic.org, a new torch is created for each edition of the Games. The initial lighting of the flame in Olympia and the first torch relay took place in the lead-up to the 1936 Games in Berlin, Germany.



Shaun White Going for Three

Shaun White will be staring down the hatch of history at the Winter Games. In the halfpipe, he will be seeking to become the first American male to win the same Winter Olympics event three times.

White, also an X Games legend, isn't focused solely on the halfpipe this year. He also returns to the Winter Games in a bid to win gold in the inaugural slopestyle event.

NEW EVENT

The slopestyle will feature riders performing tricks while navigating a course filled with challenging rails, jumps and obstacles. They will be judged on variety and level of difficulty, two areas that White has redefined during his illustrious career.

White has dominated the halfpipe competition for a decade and hopes to carry over his expertise into another category that will require a bit more agility and imagination than the halfpipe.

DOMINANCE

White, 27, won gold in the 2006 and 2010 Winter Olympics. He also became the first man to ever score a perfect 100 in the event at the 2012 Winter X Games.

Nicknamed "The Flying Tomato" for his long, red hair, White has built and strengthened his personal brand through consistent performance and strategic sponsorship partners.

Focused on making an impact on his community, as well, White recently had his hair cut for Locks of Love, a charity that gives wigs to sick children.

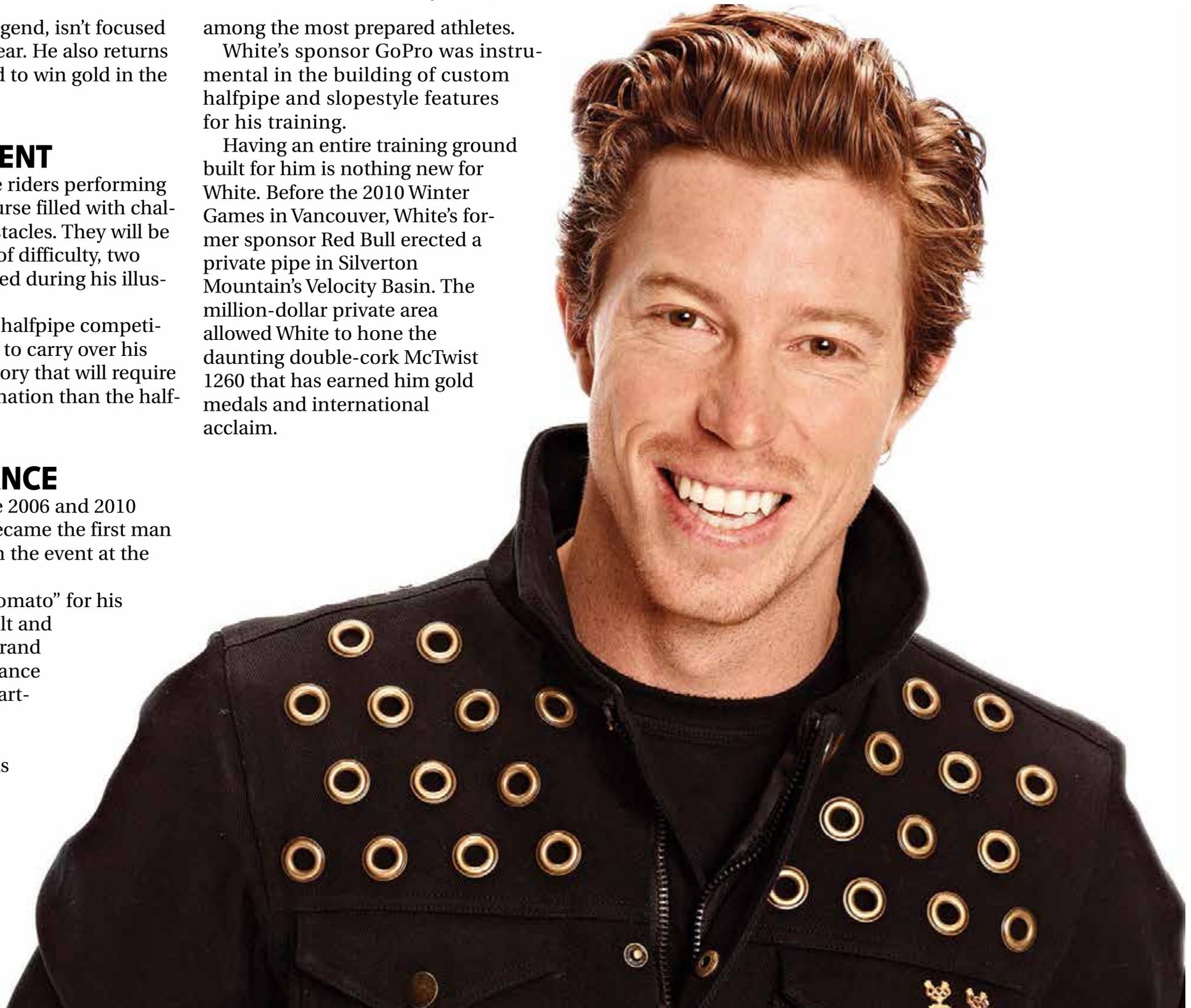
PREPARATION

When the Winter Games get under way, it is a safe bet to rank White

among the most prepared athletes.

White's sponsor GoPro was instrumental in the building of custom halfpipe and slopestyle features for his training.

Having an entire training ground built for him is nothing new for White. Before the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver, White's former sponsor Red Bull erected a private pipe in Silverton Mountain's Velocity Basin. The million-dollar private area allowed White to hone the daunting double-cork McTwist 1260 that has earned him gold medals and international acclaim.



'Miracle on Ice' Rematch

It is a game that is still considered part of one of the most inspirational American sports stories of all time. And more than three decades later, the United States and Russia renew their Olympic rivalry in Sochi.

The two countries are set to square off Saturday, Feb. 15, in the preliminary round. The contest will bring back memories from the "Miracle on Ice" at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y., which featured an underdog U.S. squad stunning a seemingly unbeatable Russian team, 4-3.

The Americans went on to beat Finland and take the gold medal.

THE RIVALRY

The rivalry between the United States and Russia has definitely tamed down over the years. One reason is that so many Russian players now play professionally in the National Hockey League.

Also, professional players are now allowed to join the rosters of their countries' teams for the Olympics. The 1980 teams were studded with college standouts, while the 2014 squads will be comprised of NHL superstars.

THE PRIDE

As with all other Olympic events, national pride will be on full display when the Americans and Russians meet on the ice.

The U.S. routed the Russians 8-3 in the World Championships semifinals in May, marking the first time Russia or the Soviet Union ever allowed eight goals in the Olympics or world championships.

The U.S. will look to build on the momentum of their victory, while the Russians will be seeking some serious retribution – for both what happened in May and in 1980.

THE VOICE

Al Michaels has built a stellar career calling National Football League games, but his defining sportscast came at the end of the original 'Miracle on Ice' game.

As the Americans skated to the victory, Michaels belted out "Do you believe in miracles? Yes!" The announcer's call has lived on and been played countless times on various highlights shows.

Michaels will once again be part of NBC's broadcast team for the Olympics and for the United States vs. Russia contest. Americans can only hope for the same type of excitement out of Michaels for the Olympic rematch.



Team Figure Skating

The inaugural team figure skating event is drawing major excitement – from both Olympic fans and athletes.

For the first time at the Winter Olympics a team event in figure skating will be held, and the event is actually slated to begin a day before the Opening ceremony.

This will mark the first time in the history of the Winter Olympics that figure skating competitions will take place before the Opening Ceremony at Iceberg Skating Place in Sochi.

HOW IT WORKS

The new event will feature teams comprised of six skaters: one male, one female, one pair and one ice dance couple. Points will be awarded to each skater or pair.

After being judged on aspects such as style and execution, the team with the highest number of aggregate points wins the gold. The event will begin a day before the opening ceremony and end two days after it, a schedule that may impact pairs skaters because their individual events begin two days later.

U.S. CHANCES

According to Sochi2014.com, the Americans will be favored to win the first-ever team event. Team coaches will surely have an array of competitors from which to choose. Expected to lead Team USA are ice dancers Meryl Davis and Charlie White, who won the silver medal at the 2010 Games and then defeated the Olympic champions for the 2011 world title.

The veteran team earned its fourth consecutive title at the 2012 Grand Prix Final, then won its fifth consecutive U.S. title in January.

Ashley Wagner will lead the U.S. women into competition after becoming the first repeat women's American champion since Michelle Kwan. The group includes 2010 Olympian Mirai Nagasu, Christina Gao, Agnes Zawadzki and Gracie Gold.

On the men's side, Olympian Jeremy Abbott entered 2013 as the top American, while 2010 Olympic champion Evan Lysacek and two-time Olympian Johnny Weir are also anticipated to contend at Sochi.



Louie Vito

SKI AND
SNOWBOARD

HEIGHT: 5'5"

CURRENT RESIDENCE: Sandy,
Utah

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

2010 Olympic Winter Games, fifth in men's
halfpipe

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Four-time Grand Prix overall halfpipe champion
(2008, 2009, 2011, 2012)

Five-time Winter X Games medalist (two gold,
one silver, two bronze)

2013, U.S. Open at Vail, Colo., bronze medalist
2013, World Cup at Copper Mountain, Colo.,
halfpipe bronze medalist

2012, Dew Cup overall halfpipe champion

2012, U.S. Open silver medalist

2011, Dew Cup overall halfpipe champion

2010, U.S. Open silver medalist

2009, World Cup at La Molina, Spain halfpipe
silver medalist

FUN FACTS: Holds an annual
fundraiser to mentor young snow-
boarders ... Competed on Season
10 of "Dancing with the Stars" ...
Enjoys skating, golfing, music and
chilling

SOURCE: TeamUSA.org



Julia Mancuso

A L P I N E S K I I N G

HEIGHT: 5'6"

CURRENT RESIDENCE: Squaw Valley, Calif.

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

2010 Olympic Winter Games, silver medals in women's combined and women's downhill, 8th in women's giant slalom, 9th in women's super G

2006 Olympic Winter Games, gold medal in women's giant slalom, 7th in women's downhill, 9th in women's combined, 11th in women's super G

2002 Olympic Winter Games, 13th in women's combined

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

15 World Cup super G medals (two gold, six silver, seven bronze)

11 World Cup downhill medals (three gold, five silver, three bronze)

Five World Cup giant slalom medals (three silver, two bronze)

Three World Cup super combined medals (one gold, one silver, one bronze)

Seven-time U.S. giant slalom champion (2003, 2005, 2009-2013)

Four-time U.S. super G champion (2003, 2007, 2011, 2012)

Four-time U.S. combined champion (2004-2006, 2009)

2013, World Cup super G, second place overall

2013, World Championship super G bronze medalist

2012, World Cup super G, second place overall

2012, World Cup city event in Moscow, Russia, gold medalist

2011, World Championship super G silver medalist

FUN FACTS: Enjoys surfing, stand up paddling and yoga ... Very involved in philanthropy ... Has her own underwear clothing line ... Most U.S. championship titles (16) by man or woman

SOURCE: TeamUSA.org



John Daly

B O B S L E D
A N D S K E L E T O N

HEIGHT: 5'11"

CURRENT RESIDENCE: Smithtown, N.Y.

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

2010 Olympic Winter Games - 17th with a total time of 3:34.01

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2013-2014 World Cup

4th in Lake Placid (2012), 7th in Park City (2012), 19th in Whistler (2012), 11th in Winterberg (2012), 9th in La Plagne (2012), 20th in Altenberg (2013), 11th in Koenigssee (2013), 16th in Igls (2013), GOLD in St. Moritz World Championship team event (2013), 5th in St. Moritz World Championships (2013), 4th in Sochi (2013)

2012-2013 World Cup

DSQ in Igls (2011), 22nd in La Plagne (2011), 14th in Winterberg (2011), 24th in Altenberg (2011), 17th in Koenigssee (2011), 6th in St. Moritz (2012), 5th in Calgary (2012), 8th in Lake Placid World Championships (2012)

2011-2012 World Cup

DSQ in Igls (2011), 22nd in La Plagne (2011), 14th in Winterberg (2011), 24th in Altenberg (2012), 17th in Koenigssee (2012), 6th in St. Moritz (2012)

2011-2012 Intercontinental Cup

GOLD in Calgary #1 (2012), SILVER in Calgary #2 (2012)

SILVER at 2011 National Championships

10th overall in 2010-2011 World Cup

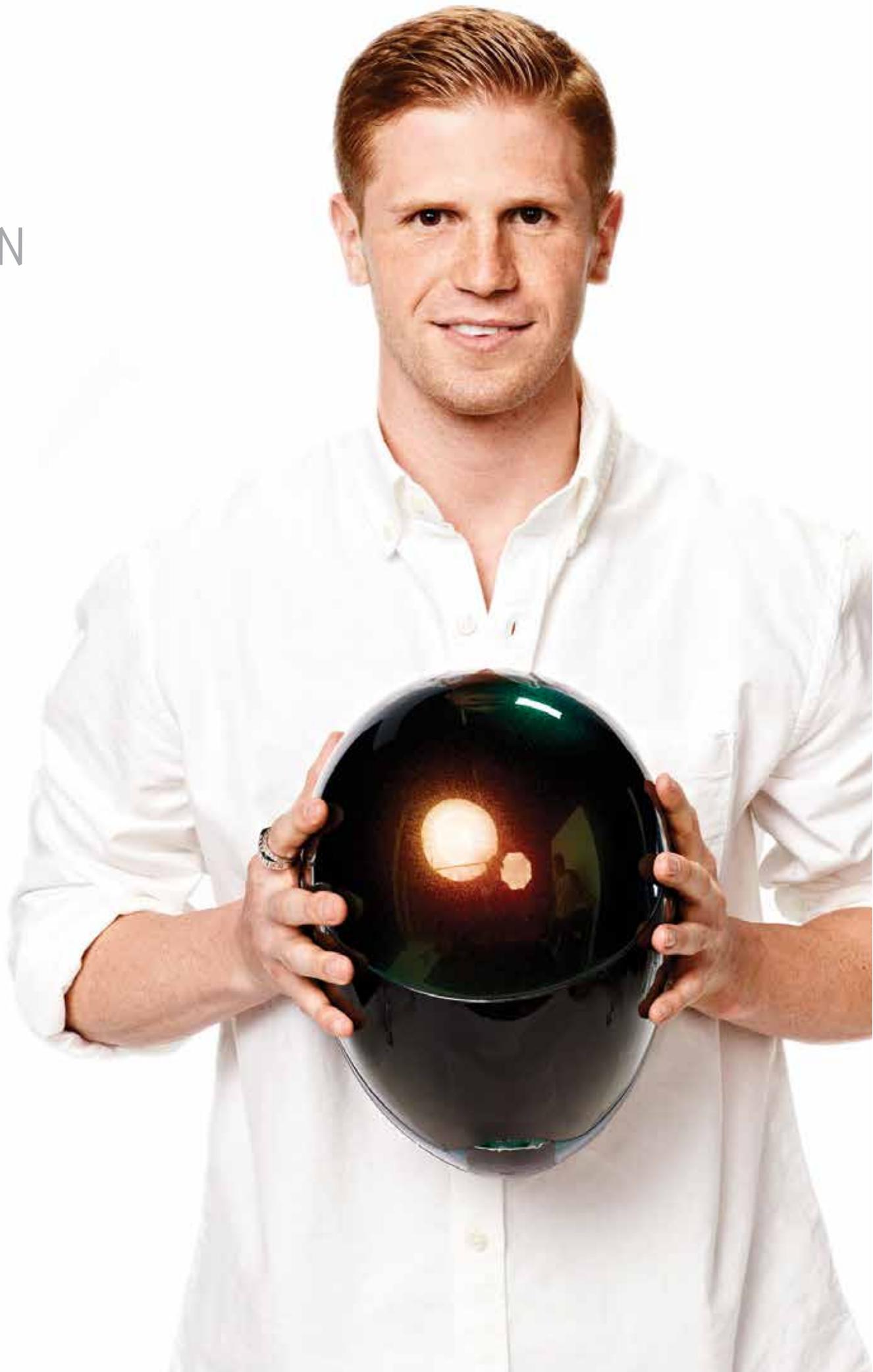
19th in Whistler (2010), 10th in Calgary (2010), 8th in Park City (2010), 10th in Lake Placid (2010), 16th in Igls (2011), 6th in Winterberg (2011), 5th in St. Moritz (2011), 18th in Cesana (2011), 17th at World Championships in Koenigssee (2011)

2010 Skeleton Athlete of the Year

2010 Skeleton Athletes' Choice Award Winner

2010 Skeleton Rookie of the Year

SOURCE: TeamUSA.org



Noelle Pikus-Pace

B O B S L E D A N D S K E L E T O N

HEIGHT: 5'10"

HOME TOWN: Provo, Utah

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

2010 Olympic Winter Games- 4th

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2012-2013 World Cup

6th in Whistler, BRONZE in Winterberg, 4th Team Event in Winterberg, BRONZE in Altenberg, GOLD in Königssee, SILVER in Igls, GOLD Team Event at World Championships in St. Moritz, SILVER at World Championships in St. Moritz, GOLD in Sochi

2012-2013 Intercontinental Cup

SILVER in Whistler #1, GOLD in Whistler #2

2012-2013 North American Cup

GOLD in Park City #1, GOLD in Park City #2, 4th in Calgary #1, SILVER in Calgary #2

5th overall in 2009-2010 World Cup

13th in Park City, 5th in Lake Placid, 6th in Cesana, 8th in Winterberg, 9th in Altenberg, 6th in Königssee, 8th in St. Moritz, 5th in Igls

8th overall in 2008-2009 World Cup

5th in Winterberg, 9th in Altenberg, 14th in Igls, 9th in Königssee, 5th in St. Moritz, 14th in Whistler, BRONZE in Park City, 9th in Park City

2nd overall in 2006-2007 World Cup

BRONZE in Calgary, 6th in Park City, SILVER in Lake Placid, 6th in Nagano, 4th in Igls, BRONZE in Cesana Pariol, BRONZE in Winterberg, BRONZE in Königssee

1st at World Championships in St. Moritz, Switzerland

First U.S. woman ever to claim World Champion title in skeleton and did so by the largest margin in women's skeleton history

17th overall in 2005-2006 World Cup

SOURCE: TeamUSA.org



Shaun White

S K I A N D
S N O W B O A R D

HEIGHT: 5'9"

CURRENT RESIDENCE:

Carlsbad, Calif.

OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

2010 Olympic Winter Games, gold medal in men's halfpipe

2006 Olympic Winter Games, gold medal in men's halfpipe

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Eight-time Winter X Games superpipe champion (2003, 2006, 2008-2013)

Five-time Winter X Games slopestyle champion (2003-2006, 2009)

Four-time U.S. Open champion

Three-time World Cup gold medalist

2006, U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix overall champion

FUN FACTS: Is also a professional skateboarder ... Was the first athlete to compete and medal in both the Summer and Winter X Games in two different sports ... Has a trick named the "Tomahawk" from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

SOURCE: TeamUSA.org

